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BY

GEORGE H. HAYNES.

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THIS paper presents some early chapters in the story of what is probably the oldest “living” mine within the United States. It became known to the whites in 1633, and has been worked intermittently for more than two centuries and a half. Very recently a company has been incorporated which is now attempting to develop this ancient property by the methods of modern mining engineering. The mine is situated in the midst of a tract of land, still wild and desolate, in the southern part of Sturbridge, Worcester County, within about a mile of the Connecticut boundary line.

Three years ago Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., of Boston, presented to this Society a collection of manuscripts bearing the title “The Tale of Tantiusques.” The volume is notable alike for the interest of the documents which it contains and for the skill with which they have been edited and arranged for preservation. This admirable work was Mr. Winthrop’s generous response to the inquiries of our late associate, the Reverend Edward G. Porter, in regard to the existence among the unpublished Winthrop papers of any documents relating to the old mine, to which his attention had been directed by Mr. Levi B. Chase, a Sturbridge antiquarian of rare modesty, and of great enthusiasm and accuracy in research. These papers interested Mr. Porter greatly, and he was planning a detailed study of them when overtaken by his fatal illness. Although a native of Sturbridge and familiar from childhood with the scenes and

stories of this ancient mine, the writer feels like a trespasser, as he enters upon the task which far abler hands had been on the point of undertaking.

In granting the charter for the Massachusetts Bay Colony the attention of Charles I. was fixed not so much upon the trading privileges or the forms of government to be granted to his restive subjects, as upon possible sources of revenue for himself.¹ Arbitrary taxes the King had just renounced in the Petition of Right.² But he was resolved not to be dependent upon grants by Parliament. Accordingly, by far the most emphatic provision of the Charter, four times repeated in substantially the same words, was the insistence that the lands granted to the patentees should yield the King "the fifte parte of the oare of gould and silver which should, from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes then after, happen to be found, gotten, had, and obteyned in, att, or within any of the saide lands, lymytts, territories, and precincts," *etc.*; for the King was here graciously granting to the patentees "all mynes and myneralls, aswell royall mynes of gould and silver as other mynes and myneralls whatsoever."³

The early colonists shared the hope that El Dorado might be discovered in New England. Foremost of them all, both in his knowledge of the natural sciences, and in his zeal for developing all possible mineral resources of the new land, was John Winthrop, Jr., who had followed his father, Governor Winthrop, to Boston in 1631.⁴ His mining enterprises were many, and claimed his attention through a long series of years. Among the first of his ventures came the salt works at Ryal-side, then a part of Salem; these he

¹ March 4, 1628-9.

² June 7, 1628.

³ Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, I., 3-19.

⁴ Of the little-known but versatile career of John Winthrop, Jr., our associate, Frederick John Kingsbury, has given an account in the Proceedings of this Society, New Series, XII., pp. 295-306. See also a fuller account, by Thomas Franklin Waters, in the Publications of the Ipswich Historical Society, 1899.

had set up as early as 1638.¹ In 1641² the General Court had ordered: “For the incuragment of such as will adventure for the discovery of mines, ——— whosoever shalbee at the charge for the discovery of any mine wthin this iurisdiction shall enioy the same, wth a fit portion of land to the same, for 21 years to their *P p* use; & after that time expired, this Court shall have power to allot so much of the benefit thereof to publike use as they shall thinke equall.” It was in this same year that the younger Winthrop went to England; upon his return, two years later, he brought over workmen, mining implements, and £1,000 for the establishing of iron works. Forthwith he petitioned the General Court for encouragement to the undertakers of the enterprise, and even for the direct co-operation of the Court in furthering the work. In reply the Court expressed its cordial approval of this enterprise as a “thing much conducing to the good of the country,” but a lack of funds in the treasury prevented the grant of any money. But to the group of individuals who joined in this venture the Court gave nearly everything for which they asked, viz.: “a monopoly of it for 21 years liberty to make use of any six places not already granted and to have three miles square in every place to them and their heirs, and freedom from public charges, trainings,” *etc.* Under such auspices iron works were started at Lynn and at Braintree, which for quite a time were prosecuted with considerable zeal and success.³ In midsummer of 1644 the General Court granted Mr. Winthrop a plantation at or near Pequod for iron works.⁴ Later in the same year the Court passed very encouraging resolutions, which took notice of the £1,000 having been “already disbursed,” and,—as if in further encouragement of the younger Winthrop’s enterprise,—there follows immediately this decree: “Mr. John Winthrope, Iunior, is granted y^e hill at Tan-

¹ Felt, History of Ipswich, p. 73; F. M. Caulkins, History of New London, pp. 40, 41.

² June 2, 1641; Rec. of Mass. Col., I., 327.

³ Boston Records, I., 68; Winthrop, II., p. 213., Savage’s note.

⁴ June 28.

tousq, about 60 miles westward, in which the black leade is, and liberty to purchase some land there of the Indians.”¹

The existence of deposits of graphite in that region had been known early in the Colony’s history. In 1633, John Oldham, of interesting memory in connection with both the Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay Colonies, made the trip overland to Connecticut, trading with the Indians. He returned with a stock of hemp and beaver. He brought also “some black lead, whereof the Indians told him there was a whole rock.”² Such a discovery, mentioned by Governor Winthrop, could not fail to arrest the attention of his son, eager for all mineralogical researches

As a matter of fact the grant by the General Court seems merely to have given validity to what had already been gotten under way. Five weeks earlier, William Pynchon of Springfield had written to Stephen Daye, the first printer in the English-American Colonies, telling him of having commended him to the good graces of a certain Indian, with the assurance that the Governor was sending this man, Daye, “to serch for something in the ground, not for black lead as they supposed but for some other mettel.”³ But Daye’s prospecting tour in Winthrop’s interest was already begun, for on the very day on which this letter was written to him, he secured for Winthrop from Webucksham, the sachem of the region, “for and in consideration of sundry goods,” the grant of “ten miles round about the hills where the mine is thats called black lead.” Only two days before the Court’s grant, as if to make assurance doubly sure, Daye secured another deed of sale, or rather a confirmation, from Nodowahunt, the uncle of the sachem, who by this instrument surrendered whatever right he had “in that place for

¹ Nov. 13, 1644. Mass. Rec. II., 82.

² History of New England, Winthrop, I., 80-111, n.

³ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VI., 377. He added that the black lead “by Quassink,” *i. e.*, in the region of Tantiusques, was not so good as that which lay five or six miles further to the south. This latter deposit of graphite is located in a hill lying partly in Union and partly in Ashford, Conn.—Hammond-Lawson “History of Union,” p. 36.

Ten Miles.” As if in doubt whether these deeds would be binding, since they were secured before the action of the General Court, two months later,¹ Winthrop caused the whole transaction to be gone through again, with much greater formality in the observance of both Indian and English procedure. This time, in consideration of “Ten Belts of Wampampeeg with many Blankets & Cotes of Trucking Cloth and Sundry other Goods” there was granted to Winthrop “All the Black Lead Mines and all other Places of Mines and Minerals with all the Lands in the Wilderness lying North and West, East and South Round the said Black Lead Hills for Ten Miles Each way only Reserving for my selfe and people Liberty of Fishing and Hunting and convenient Planting in the said Grounds and Ponds and Rivers.” This deed was signed by the mark of the sachem, of his son, and of five Indian witnesses and by the names of five English witnesses.²

Two weeks from the day upon which the General Court made the grant, Winthrop signed a contract for the developing and working of the mine, entrusting this task to a man named King, who had been one of Daye’s companions in prospecting and in negotiating the deeds with the Indians. Winthrop was to advance £20 in trading cloths and wampum, in consideration of which King agreed to go up speedily to the black lead hill, with other men of his own hiring, there to dig the black lead, for which he was to “have after the rate of fourty shillings for every tunne to be

¹ The “20th of the 11th Month, 1644.”

² Washeomo, the son mentioned above, acknowledged this instrument before Rich. Bellingham, Gov’r, 19 Dec. 1654. It was again confirmed by him March 1, 1658-9, the description being: “All there right in the Blacklead hill at Tantiusques wth all the land round about the said hill for ten miles.” Washeomo adds: “All that land aforesaid with the said Blacklead hill and all other places of Blacklead or other mines or minerals.” Another confirmation before five witnesses bears date of 16 Nov. 1658, the consideration being “Ten Yards of Trueking Cloth,” which a dozen years later seems to have been worth about four shillings a yard. (See letter of Wait Winthrop to Fitz-John Winthrop, April 17, 1671. 5 Mass. Hist. Coll., VIII., 386.) This last instrument was sworn to by the proprietor’s representative June 27, 1683.

These five original documents are in the volume presented by Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., to this Society. They were all received by Edw^d Pynchon, Regr, June 24, 1752, and recorded in the registry at Springfield. See W. 1751-3.

paid him when he had digged up twenty Tunnes of good marchantable black lead and put it into an house safe from the Indians." He was also to investigate another deposit of black lead, mentioned by the Indians, and if it should prove easier to work than at Tantiusque, he was to "notify the same to the said John Winthrop with all the speede he can."¹

During the following winter, on a journey from Boston to Saybrook, Winthrop came near visiting his new acquisition. Having lost the trail to the Mohegan country in a snow storm, he passed the night in a deserted wigwam, probably within ten or twelve miles of the mine. His first intention was to visit it; the next morning, however, he was informed by friendly Indians that he had quite missed his way, and that he was heading toward Springfield, to which place he proceeded without further delay.² The severity of the winter would probably have made mining impossible; but if King had been at Tantiusques at this time, certainly Winthrop would have made more effort to visit the mine. Although it remained in his possession thirty-two years, there is no evidence that he ever saw this property, from which he hoped so much.

For a number of years the mine lay idle, although schemes for its development were often under discussion. A Dr. Robert Child, whom Winthrop had interested in several of his enterprises while last in England, writes to him, urging him not to lay out too much expense in expectation of finding silver, of the presence of which graphite furnishes no evidence, as he shows by a detailed account of the occurrences of graphite in Europe; he adds shrewdly: "I am unwilling to beate you out of y^r great hopes; nay I hope I shall not discourage you fro^m digging lustily about it, for the comodity, as I have tould you,

¹ This may refer to the Union-Ashford deposit, or to a less-known and inferior one about three miles north of the mine. The inference seems to be that it was not included in the Winthrop purchase.

² Winthrop's account of this journey, in abbreviated Latin, is printed in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., VIII., 4-12.

wisely managed, will maintaine it selfe, but pray let not out too much cost, till you have more certainty than as yet you have.”¹ Four years later Winthrop writes to Child that he has as yet done nothing about the mine, “because of the difficulty in the beginning. Except a plantation were neere, or a good stocke it can be well forborne a yeare or 2 w^{ch} because of your departure I have not once minded to raise by other adventure.”²

These years of waiting were not a period of inactivity, for meantime Winthrop was petitioning the Connecticut authorities for the encouragement of “some search and tryall for mettalls in this Country,” citing the action which the Bay Colony had already taken. In response, the Court granted liberal monopoly privileges, in case “the said John Winthrop Esq^r shall discover, sett vppon and meinteine, or cause to be found, discovered, set vppon and meinteined, such mynes of lead, copper or tinn, or any mineralls, as antimony, vitriall, black lead, allom, stone salt, salt springs, or any other the like, within this Jurissdiction, and shall sett vp any worke, for the digging, washing, melting, or any other operation about the said mynes or mineralls, as the nature thereof requireth.”³

In 1657 Winthrop contracted with a Saybrook man, named Matthew Griswold, to work the Tantiusques mine on shares; but it is doubtful if this was carried out. In the fall of the same year, however, he at last interested in the mine some Boston men of wealth and influence, one of whom was already concerned in the Lynn and Braintree iron works.⁴

In the following spring actual work began. The new

¹ 5 Mass. Hist. Coll., I., 153-155.

² March 23, 1648-9. 5 Mass. Hist. Coll., VIII., 41.

³ May 16, 1651. Col. Rec. of Conn., 1636-1665, pp. 222, 223.

⁴ This was William Paine. 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 402. The other, Capt. Thos. Clarke, is said to have been one of the richest merchants in Boston; as a reward for public service this very year, May 6, 1657, there had been granted him by the General Court the land upon which was situated the black lead mines in what is now Ashford, the mineral from which Pynchon had declared was better than that from Tantiusques. Hammond-Lawson, “History of Union,” p. 36.

partners are eager to see prompt returns. From the first the problem of transportation was a puzzling one; they importune Winthrop to “tack such a corce, as what is or shal be diged of it you wil spedyly git it to the water side.”¹ They offer to assume Winthrop’s agreement with Griswold, since it is essential that all the lead be kept together. Again they suggest: “ffor the caredge of the leade to the water side, Rich. Ffellowes is very willinge to ingage; first, by goeing a turne or two vpon tryall, & after to goe vpon more serten price; wee conseiue hee is fited for horses, & shall leaue him to your selfe for conclution, which wee desior you wold hasten, conseiueinge it will doe best to tracke the way before the weades bee grone high.”² They made a conditional agreement with Fellows, but apparently Winthrop overruled it, for in May, Paine again writes to him: “You ware plesed in youre last to giue vs to vnderstand that you had mani carts promised you to fech the led, wich I hope, before thes com to hand you haue feched what there is; but if you haue not alredy feched it away let them by al menes carie vp barils to put it vp and bring it in barils.”³

The mine was so remote that it was hard to get workmen to go up into the wilderness or to stay there. From time to time Winthrop is urged to send men, “for they which are theare are weary of beinge theare,” but when at last one man came, under Winthrop’s direct employ, they could only report: “his hol work and study haue bin to mack trobel and hinder oure men.”⁴ Called upon to act as peacemaker, Winthrop drew up a contract for a period of about two years between his partners and the two workmen; they were to dig or raise “out of the Blacklead mine at Tantiusques the quantity of twenty tunnes yearly of good marchantable black lead, or thirty tunnes yearly if the said quantities can there be raised by such labor and endeavor

¹ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 404.

² 29th 1 mo. 1658. ⁴ Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 405. ³ *Ibid.*, 408. 11 May, 1658.

⁴ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 409.

by fire & other meanes as are usual and necessary in such workes." They were to transport this lead to some convenient point on the Connecticut River between Windsor Falls and Hockanum, and were to receive as pay for each ton so delivered "the full sume of Ten pounds in English goods or wheat & peas as they shall desire."¹

Meantime Winthrop's mining had become well known at a distance. John Davenport of New Haven writes him a friendly letter, informing him of a report that had come to his ears that black lead was commanding such a high price in London that even its dust should not be cast away as useless.²

But mining at Tantiusques was a crude process, and returns upon the investment were slow in making their appearance. In September, 1658, five months after active operations were begun, Winthrop wrote to his son, then in London: "There is some black lead digged, but not so much as they expected, it being very difficult to gett out of y^e rocks, w^{ch} they are forced to breake with fires, their rocks being very hard, and not to be entered further than y^e fire maketh way, so as y^e charge hath beene so greate in digging of it that I am like to have no profit by y^e same."³

Months later the same difficulties are being experienced. Paine writes: "the diging of the surfe (surface?) haue bin verie chargable to vs, for want of a horce or catel to carie there wood, for thay can doe nothing but by firing, and the caring wood vpon there backs tack vp the gretest part of there time: therefore these are to desire you to help

¹ This document is signed by Winthrop in the presence of two witnesses, and he appends the pledge that in case Paine and Clarke do not assent to this agreement, the two men "shalbe paid for the tyme they spend about the pay they intend to gett & as 2 men shall judge fitt." As the paper is not signed by Paine and Clarke, it is doubtful if it ever became of effect.

² Yet the price which he quotes "8l per tunn for lead in the bigger peeces," is less than that promised to these workmen, and far less than that which was obtained in later years. 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 496.

³ 5 Mass. Hist. Coll., VIII., 50.

him to the horce . . . or a paire of oxen ; but I think a horce wil be best.”¹

How long work was continued under this management and how great an output was secured, there is now no means of knowing. It is significant that the last extant reference to Tantiusques made by its first proprietor occurs in a letter from him to the Secretary of the Royal Society of London, which had been recently founded. Winthrop writes in terms of the highest appreciation of his privilege of membership in this Society ; expresses regret that his earlier communications and collections, sent to the Society, had miscarried through the accidents of war ; and gives a quite extended account of various mineral resources of North America, and of his experiments in making salt. After referring to some of his heavy pecuniary losses, resulting from the capture of vessels by the Dutch, he adds, “ evidently in allusion to Tantiusques,”² “ But who knowes the Issues of Divine Providence ! Possibly I might have buried more in an uncertaine mine (w^{ch} I fancied more than salt) had not such accidents prevented.”³ It is to be regretted that his grandson and many a later mining speculator could not have profited by this chastened experience.

For the next half century interest in Tantiusques centres not in mining experiments, but in the descent of the property. When John Winthrop, Jr., died in 1676, the bulk of his landed estate was left to his two sons, who held it in common. For years the only mention of Tantiusques is found in two letters which refer to the preservation and recording of the Indian deeds. In 1707, upon the death of his brother, all of this landed estate came under the sole ownership of Wait Winthrop. Poor health and the weight of public cares prevented his engaging actively in the developing of the mine, but he was keenly alive to the importance of safeguarding his family's interests. It

¹ 4 Mass. Hist. Coll., VII., 410.

² Says Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr.

³ Nov, 12, 1668. 5 Mass. Hist. Col., VIII., 135.

will be remembered that the General Court had granted Winthrop the hill containing the mine, “and liberty to purchase some land there of the Indians,” and that the deeds had described the land purchased as “lying . . . round the said Black lead Hill for ten miles each way.” However a geometrician might interpret this description, the Winthrop heirs always contended that it denoted a tract “ten miles square, including the black lead hill.” In the middle of the seventeenth century so extensive a purchase probably attracted no attention, but seventy-five years later the General Court was making grants which threatened to trench upon the Winthrop domain. Accordingly, in 1714, rehearsing the improvements which his father had made,—improvements now discontinued “by reason of the long warr and trouble with the Indians,”—Wait Winthrop petitioned the General Court that a certain Capt. Jno. Chandler might be empowered to survey this tract “to be to your petitioner and his heirs, and the place may be of record, that any new grant may not be laid upon the same land.”¹ Some months later he intimates that although his father’s right to ten miles square was indisputable, he himself would be satisfied with six miles square. Yet the Court proved willing to grant him only four miles square. Although this was short of his proposal and “but a small thing with respect to the contents of the purchase, which was ten miles every way from the mine,” yet Wait Winthrop declared that he was not unwilling to accept this as a settlement of the controversy, provided the boundaries could be laid out to his satisfaction.

June 8, 1715, the Court ordered the making a survey of the tract; this order was carried out October 11 of the same year, by Capt. Chandler, accompanied by Mr. Win-

¹ June 25, 1714. 6 Mass. Hist. Coll., V., 294, 295. What is apparently the unfinished draft of another petition on the same subject, supposed by the editors to have been written in August, 1714, is to be found on pp. 297-299 of the same volume. But reference is obviously made in it to the survey of October 11, 1715, which would point to a later date.

throp's son, John, who was directed by his father to make careful inquiry, in order to locate the most valuable land of the region within the tract. Their method of procedure is best presented in the words of a later statement and petition which Winthrop sent to the Court: They had hoped to take as one boundary either the Colony line or else the Quinebaug River, "but upon their view they found nothing between the mine and the river as also between the mine & the Collony line nothing but mountains & rox not improuable and scarce worth anything; wherupon they layd it out in a sort of triangular square, that thay might take in som good land with a great deale of bad, and thought as long as it took no more than the quantity of fowr miles square, it might answare the intention, it being all within the said purchase and granted to nobody else, but the House of Representatives were pleased not to be satisfied with it inasmuch as it was not laid in a square."¹ Winthrop was doubtless right in inferring that it was the influence of the Springfield representatives that blocked his scheme, for these men held that the tract, so plotted, would overlap the three mile strip which they were urging the Court to add to the new plantation of Brimfield.

Wait Winthrop was much discouraged by the rejection of this survey. He writes to his son, expressing the fear that the whole grant may be lost, and urging the speedy making of a new survey "that may be square and take in the mine and as much of the best land as it will"; he thinks "two or three days at Tantiusques would finish a new plat, now you know where the best land is."² A year later he is still ill at ease about the matter: "Our Gen^l Court sits in a few days: I would fain do something about the Tantiusque land before I leaue this place, or we shall lose it all."³ Less than a month after writing thus to his son, Wait Winthrop died.⁴

¹ June 25, 1714. 6 Mass. Hist. Coll., 299.

² Boston 8^{br} 1st., 1716. 6 Mass. Hist. Coll., V., 327, 328.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 352. Oct. 22, 1717.

⁴ Nov. 17, 1717.

A score of years had passed before the bounds of the Winthrop grant were adjusted. At the State House is a map, bearing the signature of John Chandler and of two others and headed by the inscription: "Pursuant to an Order of the Generall Assembly of the 7th day of June, 1728, we have Reformed the Survey of 10240 Acres of Land at Tantiusque or the Black led mines being the Contents of four mile Square, belonging to the Heirs of the Late Hon^{ble} Major Gen^l Winthrop Dec^d And have laid it out in a Square figure. . . . as We Judge is a full Equivalent for his former Survey." The new survey took the Colony line as its southern boundary. Brimfield New Grant overlapped the Winthrop territory at the west by a strip a mile and a half wide.¹

¹ *Maps of Tantiusques.*

At least six maps of the Tantiusques region are extant, four of them being preserved among the documents presented to this Society; the others are at the State House. They are as follows:

- I. The Map for which Jno. Chandler made the survey, Oct. 11, 1715, in accordance with the order of the Court of June 8. Scale: 100 perch to an inch. Signed by the surveyor.
- II. A Map of identical dimensions with the preceding, and dated "Octobr 11th," the year having been carefully erased. "This Map," says Mr. R. C. Winthrop, Jr., "is altogether in the handwriting of John Winthrop, F.R.S." It is signed "pr J. C. Junr Surveyor." Its entries differ in many interesting particulars from Chandler's chart.
- III. "A True Copy of The Map & Survey, According To the Minutes thereof in My hands by whome it was at first Surveyed."
Woodstock, Novr 13th 1723.
- IV. The Map of 1728, described above, by which Chandler and two others "laid it out in a Square figure."
- V. "This plan of Tantinsques or the Black-Lead-Mines belonging to John Winthrop Esq. contains 6802 2-3 Acres lying in the Centre of a fine Inhabitted Country in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England." It has neither date nor signature. It looks as if made by a wall-paper designer, rather than by a surveyor; well-drawn and tastefully colored trees are artistically scattered over the oblong tract. At the mine are pictured three houses on the left and two on the right of the road from Woodstock to Brimfield. The "Explanation" contains 14 numbers, five of them referring to the highly conventionalized villages which bound the tract; each has a meeting-house, and from four to eleven houses.

The reduction in the area of the tract from 10,240 to 6803 2-3 acres indicates an adjustment with the Lechmeres of the disputed title.

- VI. (Without Date or Signature.) Endorsement: "a rof draft of the 21 milsqvar trackt of land Comenly Cal'd and known by the name of Tanteasques belonging to John Winthrop Esq."

This is an extremely crude piece of work, yet some of the entries, particularly the mention of the meeting house and of the name "Storbridge" would indicate that it was prepared for John Winthrop, "F.R.S.," and not earlier than 1735.

It bears the following "Not.": "the pricked lins according to the best informa-

Although—or because—one of the leading lawyers of his day, Wait Winthrop left no will. In consequence there arose over the settlement of his estate a prolonged legal controversy between his son, John Winthrop, and his son-in-law, Thomas Lechmere. Our only concern at present is to note that this Tantiusques tract containing the black lead mine formed a considerable part of the estate the Connecticut portion of which was at issue in *Lechmere v. Winthrop*, a leading case in the law of inheritance.¹ Believing himself wronged by the decision of the colonial courts which required the division of the real estate among the heirs instead of its retention by the eldest son alone, in 1726 John Winthrop sailed for England, to seek redress from the Privy Council. This was finally accorded him, though only after several years of costly litigation.²

tion I have is to sew yon part of the town Bounderis as is setled within your 21 mile Right." Yet none of the Winthrop petitions ever seems to have advanced a claim to a tract *twenty-one* miles square.

An Index explains the chief points of interest. These are some of the entries:

1. is the pond at the min.
2. is ye black lead heel.
3. is owr hous betwin ye min & pond.
4. is the bruk and fall that coms out of ye pond maks quenebogg River.
8. is fullers black lead min 9 mils diste South from us.
9. is part of the town of Starford eald ye Iron workes.
15. is new matfield or as its now Cald Storbridge 4 1-2 mils dist- ye meetting hous.

¹The Tantiusques tract, together with all the other portions of the estate lying in Massachusetts, was distributed according to the laws of that colony regulating intestate estates, two-thirds going to the son, one-third to the daughter.

² The following account of this John Winthrop,—necessary for the understanding of the later story of Tantiusques,—is taken almost *verbatim* from the Introduction contributed by Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., to the volume of manuscripts.

John Winthrop was born in 1681, and was graduated from Harvard in 1700. Seven years later he was married to Anne, daughter of Gov. Joseph Dudley. "In 1711 he removed from Boston to New London, in order to superintend and develop the family property in that neighborhood, a task for which he was little suited, owing to unbusinesslike habits, irritable temper and a tendency to live beyond his means. During a residence of fifteen years in Connecticut, he managed, with the best intentions, to embroil himself not merely with the Courts and Legislature of the Colony, but also with many private individuals, who, as he claimed, had trespassed on his lands." Winthrop knew that he was thoroughly unpopular in Connecticut, especially after his appeal to the Privy Council had resulted in the setting aside of the decision of the Colonial Courts. London life proved more congenial. Accordingly, while his wife remained in New London, Connecticut, to bring up his small children and manage his estates, settling controversies and trying to meet his requests for remittances, on one pretext or another John Winthrop prolonged his stay in London for twenty-one years, until his death in 1747.

John Winthrop had early developed tastes for literary and scientific studies. In London there were abundant opportunities for the cultivation of such tastes; he formed an interesting circle of acquaintances, and in 1734 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, from which it happens that he is habitually styled John Winthrop, “F. R. S.” So valued a member did he soon become that in 1741 the fortieth volume of its Transactions was dedicated to him in a long and highly appreciative tribute.

Winthrop entertained wildly exaggerated notions of the mineral wealth to be found upon his estates, and his grandfather's lack of success could not dissuade him from entering upon the most ambitious schemes for the development of his properties. His optimism as a mining speculator was invincible. He was probably the first of the Winthrops who had actually visited Tantiusques, for it was he who, at the age of 34, had accompanied Capt. John Chandler, when he “layd it out in a sort of triangular square.” A second map of this same survey is preserved, a map which Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., asserts is “wholly in the handwriting of John Winthrop, F. R. S.” It is signed “J. C. Jun^r Surveyor,” and dated “Octob^r y^e 11th —,” — the year being carefully erased. The boundary points have obviously been pricked through this paper, and its dimensions are identical with those of Chandler's map. Yet it differs in some interesting particulars. The Woodstock surveyor took pains to designate the character of the soil in various parts of the tract; Winthrop's map not only reproduces most of these data, but it is further embellished with such entries as the following:

Rare fishing in this Pond.

Rich Lead Oar.

A place of good copper Oar.

Iron Mines.

Here is a Heavy Black Stone w^{ch} is Rich in Tinn & D^{na}.

On this side of the Hill is small Veins of pure Silver.

Granates Mountain and a fine sort of Greaish Stone
w^{ch} contain¹ ☉

And all this in a tract of a few thousand acres within twenty-five miles of this spot! It would be interesting to know beneath whose eyes it was Winthrop's intention that this map should pass. It is not without significance that everyone of these remarkable entries—not one of which appears upon Chandler's map,—is written in an ink entirely different from that of the map, and of its other notes.

Winthrop's first move in entering upon his project was to secure information as to the market for graphite upon the Continent. For this purpose he employed a crotchety ex-sea-captain, named John Morke, who represented himself to be a Swedish engineer, and who had previously served Winthrop and the Duke of Hamilton in some of their joint business transactions. His first report, from Rotterdam, was "what Incoregesment I meet with hear is about as good as all the rest and verry Endefrant is the best either to despose of a quantity and small prise."² Three weeks later he writes: "What I have Engaged for allready with what its likely to Increase I believe will amount to about one hundred and fifty Tun of black Lead yearly to Sopply France and Holland, and at a good price, above £100 p^r. Tun; and I find very Considerable Encouragement for your other Mines as Tin &c., and hope you will fix on our Speedy proceeding at my return that I may as Soon as pasable Sett out for america."³ From later developments it seems highly improbable that Morke had in reality contracted for the sale of a single ton of black lead, and the price which he here quotes is at least five times as high as that quoted to Winthrop three years later by a Hamburg commission merchant who was in position to know whereof he spoke. It was upon such misinformation as this that Winthrop's schemes were based.

¹ Dna (Diana) or the crescent, and the circle, Dr. Edward Everett Hale reminds me, were the alchemistic symbols for *silver* and *gold*, respectively.

² Oct. 5, 1736. ³ Oct. 25, 1736.

In August of the following year Winthrop engaged Morke to act as his steward at the mine. On the following day he entered into a contract with a young London merchant, named Samuel Sparrow, by virtue of which he (Sparrow) was to transport and bring the black lead from the mine and land of Tantiusques, and within six years was to pay to Winthrop seven-eighths of the net produce of the sale of 500 tons, retaining the other one-eighth "in Barr of all Comission whatever for my whole care and service," and also, apparently, in compensation for an advance of £1000 towards the furthering of the enterprise. Winthrop, on his part, in consideration of Sparrow's advances and management, pledged himself to deliver to Sparrow for sale 500 tons of black lead within six years. An advance of money on similar terms was also made by one Jeremiah Hunt, a London Doctor of Divinity.

The very next day Sparrow and Morke set sail for America; they arrived in New London after a stormy passage of nine weeks. Their coming and their errand proved an unpleasant surprise to Madame Winthrop, a woman of sound sense and business capacity, who from the first had little confidence in this mining venture. Without delay they went to the mine. There the difficulties in their way began to appear. The old workings were covered with rubbish and water, in some places fourteen feet deep. The ore, though of good quality, lay deep in small veins, in very hard rock. Transportation charges were enormous: it cost them £13. 10s. to get their two cart-loads of tools and goods taken to Woodstock, and there, ten miles from their goal, they had to store them for the winter, as no cart-way could be found over Breakneck Hill. The Winthrop family showed little inclination to advance money or to co-operate with them, and the goods which Sparrow had brought found but a slow market.

Life at the mine was far from luxurious. Morke presently wrote to Madam Hyde,—Winthrop's cousin, and the keeper

of his house in London,—asking her to “halp me to a Small repair of a fue nececaris as I havin ben so constanly tearing and haking my Smal Stok out, as Shoos, butts, and my rof traveling things to repare the which a Smal pees of Cours or Strong Check lining—Some whit, for myself and my folk, eithe of Som Cheep Irish lining or others—a pr. or 2 of good second hand blankits, a Sett of Copping Glasses and the tuls—and a good Secon hand Bible, large print with y^e pokrefy in it.” (Apocrypha!) He sends also for some dress goods for his wife, “if ther should be more Corn in Egept to spare,” and adds: “if you tak the trubl to lett Honnist Thomas bespeek my Shoos, of Mr. Dicks by turn still I know he’ll mak them strong My Sise is one Sise beger then Mr Sparows. and somthing wider over the tooes by resen of Corns if a pare or two to be for my wif and Daufter say wif sise is ner your and my daufters a sis beger but requers to be strong for boston streets is verry Ruff.” He ends his postscript with the further request: “be so good to send me also a lettel strong strip Cuton and lining to mak me west Cots trousers of to work in the heat or mins withall for them and my Stokings and Cours things is all most gon to pot.”¹

The mine was located in a wilderness about which settlements were only just beginning, and the settlers had their grievances against Winthrop, and were not over-friendly in their dealings with his workmen. Especially in Brimfield were there turbulent elements, ever ready to take a hand in disturbances that would trouble Winthrop. But occasions of discord were not wanting nearer home; the respective responsibilities of Sparrow and Morke were ill defined, and this gave rise to not a little friction between them. Even after Sparrow had returned to England with the first consignment of black lead, Morke was still keeping things in a turmoil. Winthrop’s eighteen-year-old son went up to the mine on a visit, and promptly sent word to his mother:

¹ Oct. 25, 1738.

“At my arrival Contrary to my Expectation I meet with verry Cold Treatment from Cap^t Morke, and after many hot words passing between us he Told me it was his house and that I had no buisness their to act any Thing but immediately under him—the Same Day I Came he went to Brimfield in a great Passion, where he had got a Club of Irishmen who are his advisers and went to y^e Justice of y^e Peace and Shoed his Power from my father and Indeavr^d to get false witnesses to bring an action against M^r Wright for Defaming of him.” The stores were running low : “as for y^e Rum their is about three gallons Left and no more and two of molases and halfe a barril of Porke.” Young Winthrop thought it would be best to remove what lead had been dug—about eight hundred weight—to the house of a neighbor, where one of the workmen might live until further orders, going to the mine “Three times in a weeke to See how he (Morke) Carries on.” He adds : “and as for my Part I would not live in y^e manner I do might I have a million of money, for Their is not an our in y^e Day but their is hot words.”¹

But it soon became evident that “a million of money” was not likely to be forthcoming. Sparrow had already returned to England, taking with him about a ton and three quarters of black lead. This, he sent word to America, proved to be not up to the quality of the English black lead, and the highest price he could secure was 4d. a pound.² Yet Winthrop seems to have been carried away by the actual arrival of graphite from his mine ; he is also apparently suspicious of Sparrow. Only a fortnight after Sparrow made his discouraging report, Winthrop wrote to Morke : “The Black Lead you have Dugg and Sent over proves Extraordinary, and is certainly the Best that is known in the World, it is admired by all Disinterested and Undesigneing persons, tho there is some people that have private Views wou’d seem to slight and Undervalue it. But

¹ Dec. 11, 1738. ² Feb. 6, 1738-9.

I doe assure you it containes a Fifth part Silver, but this you must keep as a secret and not talke to any body about it further then it is to make pencills to marke downe the Sins of the People." He then urges his steward to build a large storehouse: to fence in about a mile square at the mine; to turn aside the bridle-path, that their work may be more private. He assures him that he shall have a stock of milch cows and breeding swine, and reminds him: "what ever you meet with that is Uncommon or that looks like a Rarety or Curiosity, Remember that you are to preserve it for me." He bids Morke disregard all "Tittle Tattle w^{ch} is always Hatchet in Hell, with Designes to disturbe & prevent all good Undertakeings." This extraordinary letter closes with the statement: "Mr. Agate was with me this Morning and is pleased to See a peice of the Black Lead you sent over, and says he sells that w^{ch} dos not look so well for Sixteen shillings a pound."¹ This letter with address and signature torn off is among these Winthrop documents. It is unmistakably in the handwriting of John Winthrop, F. R. S. Possibly before he had opportunity to send it, his bubble of hope was pricked by a letter from a commission merchant in Hamburg, of whom he had made inquiry, and who within less than a week of the writing of the above letter makes timely report that in Germany the maximum price for black lead is sixteen shillings not for one pound, but for one *hundred* pounds. The letter is addressed to a common friend; he adds: "if Mr. Winthrop has a mine of it he had best keep that a Secrett & not send above Twenty Tons of it at a tyme for fear of runing downe y^e price."² Just a month later the same merchant writes: "I have now your favour of y^e 4 Inst. by w^{ch} See the black lead is at a great price wth you, So that much of it wou'd not readily Sell here, if of y^e finest Sort a Litle of it may be put of."³ To Winthrop he writes directly: "the black

¹ Feb. 20, 1738-9.

² Feb. 24, 1739, Hamburg. W. Burrowes to Capt W^m Walker at the house of John Winthrop, London. ³ March 24, 1739.

Lead is too Dear to Send much of it here, you may Send about 100^{lb} of it for a tryall in a Smale Caske & I'll Endeavor to Serve you therein."

Meantime Sparrow's faith in the mine had undergone a severe strain; but, resolved to make a final trial, he came to America again in the summer of 1740. In the course of the next ten months he succeeded in getting out less than a ton of graphite, and in convincing himself that it would be folly to continue working the mine longer. Yet it was months after he had heard that Sparrow had abandoned this forlorn hope that Winthrop read the following statement before the Royal Society:

<p>"One hundred Ounces of Ore out of the Mine of Potosi in Peru (w^{ch} is six pounds and one Quarter) yields one Ounce and a half of Silver w^{ch} is less than five penny Weight out of a pound of the Ore."</p>	<p>"Mr. Winthrop's black Ore at Tantiusques, out of one hundred Ounces of Ore (w^{ch} is as above six pounds and one quarter) yields Three Ounces and fifteen penny Weight of silver, w^{ch} is Twelve penny Weight out of a pound of the Ore." *</p>
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This is in Winthrop's own handwriting, and bears his endorsement: "Jan. 7, 1741, read at y^e Royal Society."¹ Whatever faith Winthrop placed in his own statement must have been rudely dispelled a few months later by the report made to him by a London assayer, who writes:

"I have tried your Samples of Ores, but none of them are of any Value except the Black Lead.

"That which you call a Silver Ore is almost all Iron, nor can any other metal be got from it that will pay the charge of refining; and this you may be Satisfied in, by Calcining a piece of that Ore, then Pound it, and the Loadstone will take it all up; which is full conviction.

¹ Although thus authenticated, the presentation of this statement is not mentioned in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.

“ That which you called a Tin Ore holds no proportion of Metal that is sufficient to defray the expense of refining.

“ The Black Lead Silver Ore holds about one Ninetenth part, but it is very hard to Seperate ; and I reckon that the value of the Black Lead lost in the operation is more than the value of the Silver.”¹

As to the occurrence of silver, modern investigation is more positive. The president of the company which is now developing the property declares: “ I have never discovered any silver in the Sturbridge Graphite mine.”² The former superintendent, a mining engineer of scientific training, says that he never saw any trace of silver-bearing graphite ore in that vicinity, nor had he found any galena; pyrites, carrying some silver, he had seen, but in very inappreciable quantities.³

More than half of the volume, “ The Tale of Tantiusques ” is taken up with letters and legal documents bearing upon controversies arising out of Winthrop’s contracts with Morke and with Sparrow. They afford but inadequate material for getting at the real merits of the question ; the difficulty is not merely that we have but one side of the correspondence : there never was any other side, for Winthrop’s policy, like that of Talleyrand, was: “ Never write a letter ; never destroy one.” Just as soon as his suspicion was aroused or as he scented trouble with a business associate, his letter-writing to that man was at an end, no matter how pathetic or how importunate the appeals for an explanation or an adjustment of the difficulty.

Morke had returned to London in February, 1741, and straightway began urging a settlement of his claims. As Winthrop ignored his every letter, he turned his attention to Madam Hyde, hoping through her to influence her cousin.

¹ 1742, Oct. 27. Letter of William Thinn to John Winthrop. Repeated inquiries at the end of the letter for the name and address of the man who had been at the mine and secured this ore may have aroused Winthrop’s suspicions that the report was not trustworthy.

² Letters of Edgar S. Hill, Esq., Oct. 10, 1901 ; March 19, 1902.

³ Mr. Mortimer A. Sears, Oct. 7, 1901.

His style was not lacking in vigor and picturesqueness ; his “ rash expretions ” in one letter gave particular offence, for there he ventured to say : “ If I had not a New England Colledge Education, I have an Honist, Christian, Usefull one. . . . if I was not the fagg End of y^e old Honourable John Winthrop, Esq^r, I ame of the Honourable & most faimus Lord Tyge Brath (Tycho Brahe !) : and all this adds nothing, not eaven one Singall Ench to my hoyght.”¹ His mood is in constant change ; now he pleads for an amicable settlement for the sake of his destitute wife and child ; now he protests his loyalty to Mr. Winthrop, and his ability to do him the utmost service ; but now, on the other hand, his words take the tone of the most arrant blackmailer ; he threatens to expose Winthrop’s secrets to his creditors, taunts him with living in the best-guarded house in London, and with not daring to be seen in the street, and threatens to have him hauled out of his own bed by the constable, unless he settles his account. So the letters run for nearly four years until the controversy was finally brought up in court, and, as Winthrop expressed it, in writing to his son, Morke was “ cast.”

Meantime Sparrow, too, at first very courteously, but later with great persistence, had been demanding a settlement. Presently suit was brought against Winthrop in New London both by Sparrow and by Madam Hunt, the widow of the London Doctor of Divinity who had advanced money for the Tantiusques venture. Sparrow claimed that he was entitled to one-eighth of the net produce of the sale of 500 tons of black lead, since by his contract he was bound only to *transport* and *sell* the lead, which Winthrop by his contract was bound to *deliver* to him. Winthrop’s contention, on the other hand, was that he was under no obligation to deliver the lead except as it lay in the mountain, and that by verbal agreement it was explicitly stipulated that Sparrow was to do the digging. Madam Hyde,

¹ Oct. 19, 1741.

a witness to the contract, deposed that when Sparrow and his associate brought the form of contract, Winthrop called attention to the omission of that stipulation, and consented to sign only after they had freely acknowledged the rightfulness of his contention; that they insisted that the omission was an inadvertence due to forgetfulness, and urged that the preparation of other papers would necessitate undesirable delay; and that they assured Mr. Winthrop that no advantage would ever be taken of him by reason of the omission. Sparrow denied the recollection of any pledges of the kind mentioned. The issue between the two it is now impossible to determine. The contract was certainly loosely drawn. Whether Sparrow was a party to artifice in securing for himself from the very beginning this loop-hole, or not, disappointment in the enterprise induced him in the end to avail himself of this technicality in the hope of making good some of his losses. He claimed with entire truth, however, that he had been led into the enterprise upon Winthrop's repeated assurances that the mineral contained one fifth part silver. That Winthrop made this assertion his own writing proves. Sparrow went further, and in a letter to Winthrop's wife—whose confidence and cordial regard Sparrow retained long after his relations with her husband had become painfully strained—declared: "He (Winthrop) shew'd to me an experement with another Mineral (of which he has 1000 Tons upon his Estate) from which he extracted a good deel of silver, and I may venture to say he is still the richest Man in all the Collonies if that experement was not made to deceive but true and fair."¹ Morke is apparently hinting at this same transaction when he writes to Winthrop: "I can sew you some of the lead you or Mistris hyde geve me the mony to purchis in Shoolan a peace of which I Saw'd in Sunder one of which was for a patren given to Mr. Sparow and Comperd it to Myne at the Mins."³ It is to be remembered, of

¹ September 24, 1745. ² September 1, 1744.

course, that at the time these charges were made both Morke and Sparrow were in controversy with Winthrop, and hence had some motive for trumping up charges against him. Yet the accusation is not made to influence the opinion of others, but is found in private letters to Winthrop and to his wife. After all, the man who could locate upon his map of Tantiusques not only black lead, but iron, lead, copper, tin, silver and gold as well, would have been strangely lacking in ingenuity if he could not have provided the samples of ore for which the map called.

These prolonged controversies had an injurious effect upon Mr. Winthrop's health; he died in London, August 1, 1747. The suits were soon renewed against his widow, but in February, 1748-9, decision in both cases was given in her favor, and costs were awarded to her.¹ According to the record an appeal was taken in both cases, but efforts to trace later proceedings have proved without result.

For many years "y^e hill at Tantousq, in which the black leade is," still remained in the possession of the Winthrop family, but there is no record of their having made further attempts to develop the mine which had produced little else than the disappointment of the fondest hopes.²

APPENDIX.

Materials for the later story of the mine are both scattered and scanty; nor do they afford much that is of interest. In the years 1828 and 1829 Frederick Tudor of Boston, who later amassed a large fortune in the ice business, secured possession of the mine by the successive

¹ These data were secured through the courtesy of John C. Averill, Esq., Clerk of the Superior Court of New London County. A letter from Gurdon Saltonstall, Jr., to John Still Winthrop, 23 August, 1750, implies that in a higher court a decision had been rendered in favor of Madame Hunt. Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., is of the opinion that the case with Sparrow was compromised.

² "The latest reference of any kind which I find among the Winthrop Papers in my possession is in the Inventory of John Still Winthrop, in 1776." Robert C. Winthrop, Jr. The item is as follows: "3184 acres of land, by estimation, being what still remains unsold of the Lead Mine Tract, so-called, appraised at £955.4."

purchase of seven pieces of land, aggregating over 127 acres, for which about \$1,200 was paid. For some years Mr. Tudor operated the mine as an adjunct to his manufacturing of crucibles, one of his first enterprises. In 1833, Mr. Tudor transferred the lands and mine to the Ixion Black Lead Factory; six years later, however, that company (July 10, 1839) authorized its agent to sell the whole property back to Mr. Tudor, in whose hands it remained until his death. At times he operated it himself; at others he leased it, for some years to a man named Marcy, who worked it on shares. There are still living two men who tell interesting stories of work in the mine in the early sixties. The property remained a part of the Tudor estate until 1889, when it was bought for a small sum by Samuel L. Thompson of Sturbridge, who apparently valued it principally as woodland. October 23, 1893, the "Lead Mine Lot," including the mine and seventy-seven acres of land was bought by Francis L. Chapin of Southbridge, and soon the Massachusetts Graphite Company was organized for the purpose of developing this ancient property. To this Company the tract of land containing the lead mine was deeded April 1, 1902.

Hitherto the mining methods employed have been very primitive. The principal vein of graphite was inclined at an angle of about 70° . In following it an open cut was made some five hundred feet in length, from twenty to fifty feet in height, and about six feet wide. This deep cut has always been a source of danger; on the thirteenth of October, 1830, the fall of a great mass of the overhanging rock crushed to death two workmen and crippled for life a third. The mine is not far from the shore of Lead Mine Pond, and quite a little above it. An adit was therefore made, along which upon a wooden track were run cars, from which the refuse was dumped down the bank into the pond. The adit was not low enough to drain the mine into the pond, and much difficulty was experienced from the water which at times filled the cut.

The present company has run a tunnel some fifty yards into the hill; from this, within a few weeks of the present writing, it is proposed to begin the sinking of a shaft to a considerable depth, from which it will be convenient to drift in various directions. Prospecting has been undertaken upon other parts of the property, and one short open cut has been made in which graphite of remarkable excellence was encountered.

NOTE. For letters containing much information of service in the preparation of this paper, the writer is indebted, in addition to the persons whose services have already been acknowledged, to Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., George A. Dary, Esq., and Edgar S. Hill, Esq., of Boston, and Mr. Frederiek Tudor of Brookline.

G. H. H.

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